DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 473 EA 013 943

AUTHOR Townsend, Richard G.
TITLE One Way to Train for the Problems of Administrators.
PUB DATE Apr 81
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 13-17, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; Administrator Role; Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; Group Dynamics; Higher Education; Management Games; *Policy Formation; *Problem Solving; *Simulation

ABSTRACT

An account of an effort to inculcate the habit of collegiality in advanced students in school administration, this paper describes an exercise in "simulated deliberation" focusing on policy formulation. According to the author, who was also group leader, students were given basic facts surrounding a problem in race relations and asked to identify the problem, what data they needed, the obstacles, how to surmount the obstacles, and other pertinent information. They then divided into task forces with the initial mission of formulating a preferred policy arising from the information given them. Goals were to learn the utility of "casing a situation," to use key terms in asking questions about a phenomenon, and then to generate frameworks for understanding and affecting that situation. The author gives a detailed description of the activities of the task forces and makes suggestions for revising the simulation. He concludes that this approach is one way for students to realize that there is no world of independent facts, that problems have no existence separate from the involvement of the policy-makers, that data do not exist except as they are called into existence and weighed by human interests, and that possibilities for structuring reality are infinite. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
R.G. Townsend
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
(EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC))
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED208473

ONE WAY TO TRAIN FOR THE PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATORS

Richard G. Townsend
OISE

Seeing the other titles and abstracts for this symposium, I considered also developing a typology, one on the form of discussion. It could encapsulate such terms as density (the extent to which conversation is crowded with facts, ideas, and conclusions that are jointly pursued), grain (the degree to which diverse subject matters are differentiated or mixed in discourse), and pattern (the ways in which talk is shared or dominated by discussants). Ultimately, however, I returned to the terms of the gentleman's agreement I had with Tom Roby, the symposium's organizer: to work less generally and to trace antecedents, characteristics, consequences, and revisions planned for one component in a particular course in policymaking. That component was a simulation of deliberation.

Antecedents

Twenty-five years ago I had a marvellous learning experience in the studios of M.I.T.'s School of Architecture and Planning. There, students were given the same starting points for month-long charettes. Far into the night, we worked at our drafting tables, observing and discussing each others' visible and useful treatments of such elements of urban forms as density, grain, and pattern. While our completed sketches and plans turned out in the end to be quite individualistic, one student's iron did sharpen another's, for each designer's early formulations reminded others of data and approaches that had been overlooked. Frankly, we stole ideas from each other, but my recollection is that we did different things with those ideas. Eventually we presented and defended our recommendations before outside jurors, visitors who had been coached by our professors to ask about our goals, techniques, problems, opportunities, costs, benefits and two other commonplaces of design that 25 years have dimmed in my mind. Happily, our jurors did not single out any one best approach, but found strength and at least a few weaknesses in each one.

Once in my first term, during a discussion after such a jury, I proposed synthesizing our strengths into one composite product. But my professors and student peers didn't sit still for that. There was, then anyway, a strong tradition of the architect and planner as creative artist and grand shaper of

EA 013 913

the environment, as a talent that was not to be diluted. Probably too, my drafting-room fellows were unwilling to give my synthesis any legitimacy, respect, or deference because, frankly, it wasn't very good.

Years passed. I strayed from architecture and planning to a domain I considered more important, elementary and secondary education. Work in inner-city schools and in a graduate program followed. Finally, as a professor of education, I found myself adapting the teaching strategies not of my early design professors but of my later normal school and education instructors. Thus, when I was an occasional teacher-educator at McGill, I evinced the individual-as-central sensibility of my well-regarded mentors of education. I put my practice teachers into situations where they were to be front and center, where they were to sharpen their skills as leaders of substantive classroom discussions. I hoped that their classroom discussions would be full of give-and-take, but in essence I wanted each of my student teachers to take -- to take over these discussions, first specifying the themes to be explored, then breaking their class into small groups to talk over those themes, then having the fruit of those talks reported to the class as a whole, whereupon that teacher would put everything "into perspective." (The simple process would be teacher ----> class ----> discussion group ----> class ----> teacher.) This pattern seemed to well-serve the needs of building administrators who wanted children to try out "the inquiry method" but who also put a high priority on orderly discussion. That mode also seemed to suit my student teachers, who looked forward to being able to shut their classroom doors, thereafter deriving satisfaction from interactions with minors. The eighth grade -- I used to tell my practice teachers, to their joy -- cannot be run as a democracy or as an eternal collegium. It is not practically possible for students to check all data that their teachers pass on; eighth graders have not yet started these procedures of independent criticism that undergird a democracy; children have to accept some material on the teacher's say so or else have limited understandings.

Now that I'm teaching school administrators, I've fallen back on the same educationist styles. Among other things, I want my administrators-in-training to enhance their talents for conference leadership. I form discussion groups, but usually before our class period is over, I too often try to crisply "wrap things up," much as I expect my students to be able to "pull things together"

out on their jobs. Frequently, I terminate our free-wheeling exchanges when they get too far "off track," so that we can "move on" to the next topic on my syllabus. Alas, we move on without having exhausted each others' problems and points about those problems. I suspect that some of my professorial colleagues behave in the same way, more or less assuming that their students will see them as role models for exercising authority in education. Even in our field's most celebrated simulation, the in-basket exercise, the student is put into hypothetical situations where he is expected to react authoritatively and individually to a barrage of memos, letters, and phone messages. Once the student has made his decisions, usually there are opportunities for dialogue among others who simultaneously have so "cleaned up their paperwork." Penetrating and rounded versions of the hypotheticals can be achieved by this process, as we professors try to bring alive possibilities of involving others in different phases of comparable decision-making. On occasion, though, our students act in these simulations as if their egos and their very reputations are on the line; figuratively, they seem to "dig in," to intolerantly defend their original analyses and choices, even going so far as to dismiss brusquely other tacks. Put another way, we've seen school administrators who manifest the exaggerated concern for their own authority and the personal rigidity that Harmon Zeigler has found in his research on U. S. superintendents.[1]

Lately, I've come to think that this emphasis on the educator as direction-giving leader, while one of several apt roles for school teachers, is maybe not such an effective way for training school administrators. Managers, after all, have to deal with adults in their organizations who, as professionals or union members, expect to be consulted or persuaded. Managers also have to respond to other community leaders who see the school as an instrument for local democracy. Indeed, our focus on the administrator keeping his own counsel is not congruent with part of what we know about the oral tradition of school executives: for one reason or other, those administrators typically offer a show of openness and collegiality, keeping their office doors wide-open, accessible to many if not all, interacting at least fleetingly with a range of adults in the exchange of ideas, materials, feelings, motives, and skills.[2] What follows is an account of an effort to inculcate the habit of true collegiality in a cohort of advanced students in school administration.[3] Admittedly, this account is "soft" and

impressionistic research, being based on my participant-observation notes and reflections of others in that class. Those reflections were written at our course's end, as students thought back to their interactions around common starting points, much as we design students reminisced 25 years ago after we'd turned our designs in and adjourned to a pub up Massachusetts Avenue. My students last year also were expected, by way of concluding course 3041, to reflect on their work in mutually determining policies and on their assessments of their peers' work; I hoped they would be more systematic than we drafting-room habitues were back in that Cambridge pub in the 1950's. My students in 1980 were writing for themselves, to provide a record of what they had done and what they might have done differently. They also were writing for a grade in a course that I taught, and so their remarks may have been less candid than observations written for a detached third party.

Characteristics of the Simulation

The class was a cohort of 13 doctoral students in their first year of academic residency. They were a mature lot, ranging in age from 28 (a student from South America to 56 (a corporation president from North York, outside Toronto). They also were men and women of considerable intellect, competencies, and social ability, representing important ethical values. They all had Masters' degrees in educational administration and so had been introduced to the themes of our field and, importantly for the simulation, to the principles of group dynamics. In most cases, though, several years separated them from full-time university study, and my belief is that some suffered from problems of re-entry into intense academic life. They were self-styled practical realists in from key roles in the field, tending to regard themselves as "students" only with that term in quotes. I believe that to them, we staff members seemed overly secure in our inward-looking ivory tower.

Despite tremendous accumulated experience, a fair number of these students were anxious about that first term. They wanted to "measure up" to the demands of being a "good" doctoral candidate. Measuring-up would justify decisions they had made to interrupt their careers and, in some cases, to uproot their families over thousands of miles for doctoral study.

To guide our simulation activities and prior to our first meeting in September, students read a section on the possibility of simulated deliberation from Schwab's College Curriculum and Student Protest. (I had been drawn to Schwab partly because my wife had been, and is, a dedicated student of his; I believe wives influence their husbands more than most of us husbands care to admit.) In those 24 pages, Schwab gives a "summary analysis of the defining characteristics of the deliberative problem, and some suggestions of possible counterfeits and approximations suitable to a simulation." At our first class meeting, the 14 of us discussed those pages, trying to relate their import to other simulations we had experienced. To the annoyance of a number who disbelieved in theory, we returned throughout the term to that reading which -- among other things -- calls for simulators to modify theory in application to particular circumstances.[4]

In what I hoped would be a fair operationalization of Schwab's suggestions, on that first day I gave each student two pages of basic facts. (More facts might have been overwhelming, I reasoned.) These were "clues" for them to develop for the course's three axes of study and action -- policy formulation, policy implementation, policy assessment. They were comments on particular events from varied sources, not theoretical subsumptions of facts. To reduce chances for easy groupthink, that drive for consensus at the cost of even temporary dissent, each student had 15 minutes by himself in that first plenary session to mull over and to start assigning meanings to such chunks of data as these:

> "Out of a total of approximately 200 migrants from Nova Scotia who are seen as creating the "Negro Problem" at the United Church Centre, some informants estimate that not more than 10 percent have attained higher than a grade 9 level of education. A large number of them are unemployed. They are thus unable to participate in apprenticeship training programs because a minimum level of grade 10 education is required." --
> Labor official in Toronto, 1968.
>
> "The other day I had a fight with a girl who called me a nigger and a honkey. I had another fight with a brown girl, and I told her that me and her are both brown. So if I'm a honkey, your a honkey too and I'm brown and your brown too." --
> From a student essay, at a school in North York.

> "During the 1940's to the early 1960's, the school system tried varying degrees of intensity to teach newcomers to speak English as quickly as possible so that 'we' oldtimers could understand 'them' and 'they' could understand 'us.' The systems also displayed the Union Jack (flag) in front of everyone pretty regularly and had pictures of the Queen in all the classrooms. (Early in this period, there had been a King, of course, and it took us some time to get used to the change of monarchs. In fact, that transition was our idea then of culture shock.)" --
>
> Ontario educator, 1980.

> "One event which had impact on the Board was the outbreak of racial conflict among black and white youths in the Regent Park housing development, in late spring, 1976. The Board was not directly involved, but it felt it had a responsibility to do whatever it could to help resolve the problems, and commissioned a study that summer of the incidents and short-term solutions. This was conducted by two local teachers and a community worker who found how local teenagers viewed the school's handling of racial tension." --
>
> Board of Education report, 1978.

Some began to sort out these and other clues readily -- in to educational and non-educational constructions, people needs and government goals, white and non-white matters, and so on. But there were others who expressed discomfort right away with this melange of viewpoints and with the ambiguity of my expectations that they "mull over." They were urged to ask, of those "clues," the following questions related to the first phase of the policy process, formulation:

> What seems to be the major problem here? With what terms or conceptualizations do you want to take hold of that problem? What would be suitable data for such a taking-hold. What obstacles do you envision in gathering those data? How might you get around those obstacles? How might you array data to move toward useful information and advice? What larger aspects of the phenomena are excluded by your formulation of the problem? In what sense would your particular approach be valid?[5]

Then, only about 120 minutes into the course, each student was assigned to one of three task forces. Those who shared an office at OISE usually found themselves in the same group. The groups were mixed in ability, but I assume that "the more able" can learn from "the less able." For the sake of balance I also brought together people with markedly different backgrounds and expertise. Looking through their files for admission to OISE, I discerned certain conservative, liberal, and socialist inclinations among them, and sought to assign at least one person of each of these persuasions to each group. Finally, I appointed a woman as convenor of each group, approvingly citing that research which indicates that women generally are more efficient and effective organizers of schools.[6]

The students dispersed to places of their choice with the initial mission of formulating a preferred policy arising from their processing of those snippets of data I'd passed out earlier. More specifically, within 36 hours each group had to begin a process of seeking out additional information, but in a special way: they were to give to the Data Bank:

1. a short list of questions that their group wanted privately answered at the outset of the next class meeting.
2. a justification for every question which suggested how their group anticipated using the answer, and
3. a statement of the criteria their group would apply to judge the reliability of answers.

An early order of business for each group, then, was to achieve a routine for devising those statements for the Data Bank and a consensus on how it would accept or refute the Bank's inputs.

Initially, John Brown, an advanced doctoral student, and I were to be the so-called Data Bank, functioning as external consultants, providing information in writing that was to be used in developing and testing possible policy formulations and implementations. Brown and I retrieved our details from official records and reports, mass media, and from such expressive documents as letters and interview transcripts. Students were advised that our Data Bank's answers might include solid facts as well as unsubstantiated garbage. "Policymakers," we said in effect, "beware, and be discerning in your use of evidence."

Since our situation was real, students might well have gone outside the course for confirmation or elaboration to such other sources as libraries, files, and people at downtown agencies, teenagers at the Regent Park housing development, et al. But I emphasized that the three groups were to restrict their information-gathering to solicitations from the Data Bank, and of course from each other's general knowledge base. I had two reasons:

1. I preferred to have these students thinking and discussing rather than endlessly chasing-down facts, and

2. for later analyses at the fourth and fifth class sessions, I wanted the forementioned detailed records of questions posed, justifications given, and criteria established; such a record might not be available were the groups freely tapping sources unbeknownst to me.

With that stricture, the simulation lost an aura of reality for some. In responding to the students' questions, the Data Bank did give each group a half-dozen typewritten pages at the start of the second and third classes, but this turned out to be insufficient. "What agency would entrust an important policy design to part-time workers over three weeks?", my students queried. "Real-world people would have reams more data than we will," some complained. "The week-long delay in getting answers back from the Data Bank is untenable," one take-charge student told me; he had wanted his colleagues to scout out new information, pass it on to him by Friday night so that he could study it over the weekend and so that he could then suggest new directions for his group at its next work session.

I justified my unpopular stand against the students finding new data outside the course on the grounds, hypothesized in the policy literature they would be reading, that most people engage in "anchoring." That is, when called upon to assess facts, any number of facts, then tend to peg their judgments to some initial point of reference or interest, whether or not that reference is relevant to the context or tasks. I posited that the simulation could still be satisfying if members of the task forces caught themselves in such anchoring and thereafter reflected upon the implications of that practice, i.e., how does a

person's mind-set influence his policymaking? Further, I argued that the groups might be hindered from penetrating to the core of their problems if their goal was just to process "reams" of data; what they ought instead to be looking for were disparities in data which would make them think twice before settling upon a pattern emanating from easily correlated facts.

The groups still faced the difficulty of beginning to coalesce as a work group. Members of one group which I visited on that first day did not seem to be listening to each other, and so I asked members to repeat what they understood the others to have said. Afterwards, one student there said that "our group began to jell, for we realized that we had not been hearing each other as accurately as we had assumed." Another noted that "by writing down each of our versions of the problem on the board, we began to see the different alternatives behind our different words, and we could talk about that." I further complimented this group on their implicit initial decision to work as a whole group; they were unlike another task force that appeared already to have broken up into two smaller subgroups. My hunch was that such a division of labor was premature until all members had a clear sense of their various tasks and the inter-relationships of those tasks.

At our second plenary meeting a week later, after some attention to their readings on policy formulation, each student received a copy of the Data Bank's "printouts" especially developed for his or her task force. Reflecting on those printouts, each group had 40 hours in which to give me at least 500 typewritten words on the following:

1. What sort of action group it saw itself as being, serving what kind of client group, and why;

2. the general course of action that the group believed it should follow in coping with the problem it had identified; and

3. action proposals that the group had considered and rejected, together with the chief reasons for those rejections.

At the same time, the groups each had to start thinking about means to implement their preferred policy formulations, framing questions about that topic for the Data Bank to answer; the readings on policy implementation were commended as suggestive. Again, groups had to justify each question put to the Data Bank and to cite criteria which they would bring to bear in estimating the validity of the Bank's replies.

At the groups' work sessions, I urged students who seemed inhibited to be honest and open with each other over their constructions of reality. When it became apparent in one group that agreement would not come easily, I discouraged that task force from achieving formal closure on an issue by taking a vote or by bargaining. Instead, I urged those students to adopt the "avoidance for now" approach, sliding off the thorny question without formal resolution. Later I was told that the group did come back to the divisive issue at a point when other aspects had been worked out, when the rough edges of disagreement had been softened.

At the third session, task forces devised the approaches that they would take to implementation, building on Data Bank printouts they had just received. Groups had carte blanche to revise their policy formulations of a week earlier, in the light of deeper understandings. Again, they had a 36-hour deadline, this time to type-up their final recommendations.

When we convened at the fourth session, each student received not only a copy of each of all the group's final recommendations, but interim ones as well as the detailed records of questions, justifications, and criteria. Each group had 135 minutes then to do two things:

1. To develop a report reflecting on the critical moments, periods, and circumstances of its own phases of policy formulation and implementation -- this assignment, like all the others was known in advance, and one group came to the fourth class with this task already accomplished; and

2. to analyze the texts produced by one other group and to depict the probable impacts of the recommendations of that one other group.

11 . . .

Finally, I reminded the students of what I'd said at our first meeting: that teams and individuals would not be graded on the basis of their activity in the simulations; instead, marks would be tied to performances on the quizes, on the readings and on the four term papers (on the (1) formulation, (2) implementation, (3) assessment of a particular policy of their choosing and (4) on their overall reflections on the entire deliberative process). I repeated the no-grade promise at that moment as I wanted the students to be unconstrained in discussing each others' work, to divest themselves of any fear that they might jeopardize their classmates' standing in the course or OISE's doctoral program. This ground rule was an operationalization of Schwab's point that students in a simulation of deliberation should not be competitive, but concerned as friends that each has worked and chosen well. For that same reason, I had avoided referring to the groups as "teams," as that term can have certain win-lose connotations.

When the groups reconvened to begin their policy assessments, I elicited from them an admission out of Schwab, that any one policy was based on an incomplete view of the problem at hand and that the other students may have seen other facets of the problem. At this point, one student accused me of trying to insulate the groups from searching review; I was being overly "protective." A searching review was in order, I indicated, but I hoped that the "heat" would not deter us from relating the three different policies to a whole that was larger and more encompassing than any of the narrow and less complete views each task force had.

Later, in the long session where the groups probed each others' contributions, I saw my role as the following:

1. To help the task forces to speak to each other's points. Often they made inferences about the others and then tried to go on to speak to their own points, wearing the same lenses to look at others' policies that they had worn to formulate and implement their own.

2. To appreciate the ways in which the three groups had taken hold of the problems, the different data they had assembled

for that taking-hold, the variety of standards and criteria that had applied for thier judgements, that ways groups moved from simple to complex forms of the problem and so forth.

As it happened, one group saw the situation in terms of group process (negotiating and exchanging between various elements in the community for a measure of racial harmony); another group reacted bureaucratically (adapting rules and standard operating prccedures for promotiun and assessment of minorities); and a third group adapted an approach that was part organizational-development (with workshops and encounter groups to sensitize staff against racial slurs), part system-management (with elaborate monitoring and reporting of equal opportunity programming), and part structural (with a decentralizing of responsibility to the neighborhood level). I tried to suggest that the different versions could be right in different ways about different facets of the problem situation.

3. To suggest related problems, drawn largely from a dozen or so issues in our readings. Some problematic themes: How much truth can a client handle? The likelihood of implementation is a useful criterion for evaluation of a policy formulation. Objectives to some extent can depend on resources (since where one wishes to go can depend on whether or not one is able to get there).

4. If a group did not clearly operationalize a term like "power structure" or if a group's conclusion did not follow-through on an early promising idea, I tried to step in with a question reflecting my curiosity.

I also attempted what I tried at M.I.T. 25 years ago after the jury session; only this time I encouraged the students to relate each of their policies to a larger context, e.g., toward the responsibilities of the provincial and federal governments for job creation as well as job education to foster inter-racial ease.

Brown, the advanced doctoral candidate, also spoke at our fifth meeting about his dissertation-in-the-making, from which our original clues had come. He was able to answer students' questions about how their varied constructions differed from those of certain real actors, and to speculate with the rest of us about how we might have modified our formulations and implementations had we known or asked about some of the facts that he (Brown) knew, e.g., the chairman of a subcommittee on race relations in the schools was under attack from his constituents for his civil rights sympathies.

Even with the familiarity that Brown and I had with parts of the problematic situations, students were chagrined that we did not respond adequately to their more harrowing questions. I argued that so-called expertise does not necessarily lead to "good" decisions, as in the case of the decisions taken by the "best and brightest" to expand the Vietnam War, on the basis of all sorts of intelligence reports and strategic analyses. Possibly my students, generally reflecting the Canadian view that the war in southeast Asia was absolutely appalling, could agree with that example, if not that generalization. Further, experts are not always available and students should recognize that authorities often are uncertain or corrigble through the process of public criticism.

Rationally and emotionally, we had examined the uncertainty that surrounds policymaking, but still my students were not prepared for as much groping and indeterminacy as they found in the clues and situation. One said that little positive learning occurred in the course's first three weeks. Students pressed me to scrap the original starting points in favor of "a universal problem," i.e., one that they were familiar with, such as student discipline, staff absenteeism, textbook suitability, community apathy. While acknowledging the importance of their suggested topics, I claimed that they would learn more if challenged by a flux different and broader than the milieus they had operated in as teachers, union activists, principals, and chief executive officers of single organizations. I was prepared to "ride out" that controversy then, but the possibility exists that my students were handed problematic situations that Brown and I originally were comfortable with for <u>that</u> very reason, that Brown and I felt unthreatened with subjects we had researched.

Almost half the students said that time constraints, posed by their other courses or their part-time jobs or their family obligations, prevented them from vigilantly pursuing the best feasible policy. With smiles, shrugs, and wit, several told me in class that the assignment at bottom was not worth a heavy investment of themselves. One indicated that he wanted to acquire a maximum of knowledge in a compartment marked Administration, and in the shortest possible period of time, without fiddling around with a variety of messy environmental clues.

One group, with two white students and three students of other ethnic stock, never was very productive in their discussion of Race Relations, taken by some as a problem situation. It was "like walking on eggs," one of the two white students said about efforts to mutually accommodate. "The situation was too sensitive for us to be affected by others' opinions."

One group in the first simulation --with minority representation-- decided to take as long as necessary to see the task and process through, in hopes (they said) of reinforcing their intellectual powers and finding moral support in each other. As a task force, they developed the toughest questions for the Data Bank, e.g., "What are the perceptions of the causes and extent of racism held by each of the 20 members of the Board of Education subcommittee constructing a policy?" And their recommendations were the most multi-faceted, embracing curricular and extra-curricular incentives, approaches that were top-down from the Board's peak coordinators and bottom-up from the people who were close to the tensions. I don't know if their grassroots idea of having neighborhood advisory councils would really "solve" the problems that they formulated, but their councils certainly would generate more interesting successor problems; in a world without immediately perfect answers, perhaps the most we can hope for from our policies is that they sensitize us to what we as policymakers ought to prefer and ought to do.

That high-energy foursome began by wondering among themselves just why they should heed Schwab's first condition for effective deliberation -- that policy-makers should feel the "pinch" of the problem (either needfully for themselves or empathetically for those affected by their decisions). The group's resolution to their "why pinch?" question was to make the simulation relevant to their own real doctoral and post-doctoral lives. They would use their time in and out of class to hone their prowess not just in policymaking but in organizational analysis and research design, the subjects that they and the nine others were taking in common during that first term. As a base for that honing, they spent a fair amount of time during the first week getting to know each other, revealing their backgrounds, the different facets of problems that were important to them, their individual assumptions about leadership, the sorts of data they had worked with before, and

so forth. They became sensitive to each others' moods, particular problems, and idiosyncracies. "Because we had taken the time for team-building," one member later said, "we felt free to offer ideas and to build on each others' contributions."

They then divided up the course's readings, wrote abstracts for each other, and offered interpretations and critical analyses, much as law and medical students share the burden of their excessive readings among colleagues. As they took hold of the simulation's possibilities, they were not always polite with each other, operating on the norm that they would not learn much by always agreeing. After their disagreements, they became jocular, recalling how they defined, discussed, revised, and re-discussed every major point until each was satisfied. They could document that their team-building and maintaining roles were shared by all and that their policies were a synthesis of each other's ideas and personalities. My judgment was that their work was effective. This high-energy group, then, was also high-maintenance and high-task. (But they did not produce the most paper; a moderate-energy group did that.)

There are several explanations that the other students in the course gave for why, when time for the second simulation came, they wanted to reconstitute memberships of the three task forces. One explanation, publicly given, was that they wanted the broadening chance to learn from persons different from those they had already deliberated with; a variant of this, privately expressed, was that they hoped new peers would be more reinforcing and fun to learn with; rewards in their first group had ceased or had become out of proportion to their group. A third explanation -- rather conspiratorial, I'm afraid -- was that members of the low-energy group and the moderate-energy group wanted to "break" the work and productivity norms of the high-energy group. Whatever, I respected the majority vote of the class for a shift in teammates, but I did hold out the hope that, when developing their final reflexive papers, students would compare each of their work groups in the course's two simulations.

Candor demands that I admit that three out of the four members of the high-energy task force in that first simulation did not apply their initial learnings about process or their energies in the second simulation. They said they were socialized into the "why-bother?" disposition of their new colleagues, and their loyalties were still with their first partners (whom they had wanted to work with again). The second simulation did have one high-energy group but it also had two diffident low-energy ones. "Strong personalities began to emerge," one student wrote, "and there was considerable philosophizing. The members of my group appeared to be more preoccupied with projecting their own self-image than dealing with the problem." Eventually they did get around to trying to definitively solve the problem, without undertaking numerous trials at formulating and implementing. I hope I am not being unfair when I say that "solving" the problem for them meant filling in the minimum number of pages for the Data Bank and treating someone in their group who had heard a five-minute talk once about a seemingly related topic as the expert and authority, (without subjecting his ideas to a particularly rigorous evaluation). Early on, each member specialized in an aspect of the situation, and when that "specialist" informed the others of his recommendations, his colleagues typically did not press for the relevant data undergirding those recommendations.

One low-energy group even stopped asking questions (and thereby stopped offering their rationales and criteria for judging reliability). When I asked why, my respondent said with a straight face: "To reduce our anxiety. But we do care, honestly, we do care."

Every once in a while, one or two members of the low-energy groups were on the verge of inventing or recycling an idea on formulation or implementation. But then a colleague would say, "Come on, let's get cracking" or "I've got a class at one o'clock" or "Sorry, but I can't meet on this till after class next week". The reworking of ideas was considered a waste of time. By their own reports, these low-energy groups acted consensually, flowing with their majority, pouring oil on any troubled waters that may have started to erupt between themselves, "going along," as one student said, "with the general drift in order that there be continuity in the group process." These low-energy groups, in the distinction offered years ago by Hall, remained ad hoc groups, with low tolerance

for internal conflict; thus, they never became "established" groups, with high tolerance for internal conflict and decision-making of high quality.[7] In sum, these groups evinced a certain technical attitude which did not demand involvement.

Within one of these groups, a lackadaisical student all but dropped out of the simulation (but not the course). Yet he was not even seriously confronted by his rather passive colleagues over his non-involvement.

The high-energy group in the second simulation also had difficulty in holding on to one of its members. There had been, by one account, "a low-keyed struggle for group leadership and certain alliances had been formed. As seen in the dichotomy of our types of questions to the Data Bank, we were pretty much split down the middle." Then one member was about to mutiny from "this silly exercise," but he was forcible detained and jointly persuaded by his colleagues to continue by an argument that went something like this:

> It's not fair, Mel, that you pull out. We also might like to pull out, but we can't and so you can't either. Your non-cooperation will be painful to us. Besides, the product we develop is not the only important part of this silly exercise -- another crucial learning is how we approach things when we're developing solutions. You know, how we find a problem, how we distinguish it from a puzzle, how we invent strong criteria of choice, the whole bag. We can learn this while we get to know each other better.

That appeal reached Mel, who had been hoping to find something of a community in our Ed.D. program; he saw benefits then in the continuation of this simulation, wherein "classmates became real people." Thereafter, a shared leadership emerged, what antagonism that had existed began to disappear and the group went on to formulate some ingenious approaches to fostering legislative amalgamation of the two Ministries. Indeed, I wish that I'd had some of their ideas about role changers, task changers, and attitude changers a year earlier when I'd completed a study on the same problematic situation; had their stock of ideas been developed sooner, the Ministry might have moved toward merger in a different and possibly superior way, I believe.

Counting this group and the four other students that succeeded in the first simulation, I must reckon that only about half felt "the pinch." One of the unpinched students remarked about this at the end of the term:

> We did not carefully scrutinize the original clues, and the Data Bank was not fully utilized nor was the resulting feedback carefully analyzed. We asked pertinent questions, but seldom did we incorporate the answers in a meaningful strategy. This was primarily due to my group's emphasis on a community relations or process model, and not on concrete action proposals that fit the simulation's particulars. Our final policy, which was less than unified, could have applied to almost any urban problem...The fact was that we lacked sensitivity and empathy for the real people in the situation. Our clients were the children who walk the streets and roam the corridors of the schools in the simulation. But we backed off from doing anything concretely real for them. We became absorbed in elaborating obvious and general steps of a process to maybe involve Everyman in education Everywhere.

Somewhat more philosophically, another unpinched students commented in her reflective paper:

> I rather suspect that we never would have time to pursue the issues because we are not oriented by virtue of our culture or our training to pursue such matters with purposeful intensity and intellectual rigor. Our second group, for instance, plunged immediately into the task, having assumed the mentality of the complete bureaucrat of the classical model, and pottered about, naively as I now see, fully believing in the rectitude of our thinking of organization in hierarchial terms and suggesting cosmetic, superficial changes that would legitimate current practice and offer the greatest prospect for acceptance politically in the legislature and bureaucracy in the two Ministries. What we never questioned was the whole idea of hierarchial power structures or the viability of the Ministries reorganizing themselves around function or personalities or whether -- on a more basic level -- the structures were needed at all. Again, I could defend our activity by saying that time limitations prevented us from rediscovering the wheel and from entering into lengthy talk on metaphysical aspects of politics, governance, organizational theory, human nature, etc. But because we were so adept at avoiding these issues, I doubt that we would have elevated the discussion. Hence the unlikelihood of our arriving at an understanding of the nature of the best feasible policy you charged us to find. Without a conscious consideration of the valuing dimension, we are destined to become little more than amoral automatons responding to the dictates of the environment.

That was a stern verdict on her behavior, but I had to agree that she and others in the simulation did not move from their aggravation over the clues toward valuing and moral policy-making.

It is possible that the student I just quoted -- and a few others who wrote in the same vein -- felt obliged to utter such a mea culpa. Perhaps they thought that their instructor would think better of them if they admitted to superficiality? Well, professors do like students to "see the light," even if the student's high level of competence in general did not animate a high level of simulated deliberation. This student's "let's-get-by" stance is so common, incidentally, that Herbert Simon has invented the verb satisfice to describe administrators who do not confront issues, who let bygones be bygones, and who settle for "good enough" or "adequate" rather than pushing themselves for the optimal. In a rather sad sense, then, the simulation was realistic in eliciting such behavior.

Students did fulfill -- often less energetically than I had hoped -- the Schwabian condition of treating theoretical knowledge by modifying it for particular situations. In spite of previous graduate study, some were uncertain about how to go about this, although my lectures and few Data Bank responses were meant to demonstrate how one might exploit academic concepts. A first cut for students in this matter of framework-modification came in choosing criteria for ascertaining the reliability of data. The high-energy task force adapted some of Jerome Murphy's writings on evaluation to propose such standards as soundness (from typical, diverse, and crucial sites), plausibility, and fairness.[8] A moderate-energy group adapted the idea of downplaying emotive connations, figurative fallacies and insufficient instances that the Data Bank spewed out; they saw through, for instance, a facile generalization by the Data Bank that because ethnic minorities are the largest single group committed to mental hospitals, therefore mental hospitals are ethnic-based institutions. A third group, however, never quite got the hang of modifying terms from the literature for this purpose; the most that this task force could offer as a criterion was a bow to the teacher as authority figure, i.e., "Certainly the Data Bank would not knowingly lead us astray."

Toward the end of the first simulation, as groups were considering the mix of social, economic, and political forces they had asked about, all seemed to realize that no one behavioral or normative model would satisfy their intuitive requirements for covering the vital aspects of their situations. Things got rolling then, and from discussions that I sat in on, I'm persuaded that somewhat more than half the students grasped something about the utility of "casing a situation," using key terms to ask questions about a phenomenon, and then generating one's own frameworks to understand and affect that milieu. I'm not so sure that the conceptionalizations and frameworks which they modified have very much to do, however, with their internal attitudes about administering in the real world. My hunch is that some had the feeling that "social research is not readily enough available for us, at least with regard to this policy; but the professor -- like other professors -- does seem to want some references to the readings, and so let's give them to him." I'm not even sure whether it has particularly occurred to the high-energy students that the process that they simulated so well is akin to the scientific process they now are pursuing as they develop dissertations.

At the session where groups estimated the consequences of each other's policy choices, I hoped the social climate could be one of fraternity and mutual respect. So, at first I was alarmed when a low-energy group attacked with some condescension and bitterness the "inconsistency " and grammar of the high-energy group. I saw the attacking group as taking hold of the other group's terms and problems in an insubstantive way; it seemed to me, and to others, that the attackers were belligerently defending their own rather different, difuse, and pedestrian recommendations. Before I could do much in the way of intervening to lead the class away from an acerbic debate and toward a caring exchange, the high-energy group defended itself with aplomb, their tempers in check and their plan in tact. Some of our readings had examined the legal, political, and psychological aspects of persuasion, and this was a chance for that high-energy group to practice its skills of advocacy. Perhaps the attack also helped to further solidify the high-energy group. In any event, even though I officially dissolved that task force for the second simulation, those four students chose to keep on meeting to study for my quizes, to help each other with term papers, and throughout the next term to meet for at least one long afternoon a week about the development of their dissertation proposals.

Towards Revisions in the Simulation

Policy analysis usually is treated as an intellectual activity comprised of understanding issues, rehearsing alternatives, and appreciating consequences of choice associated with particular decisions. In future simulations, I will continue to emphasize those cereberal aspects, just as I also expect to continue emphasizing the affective dimension -- that policies are expressions of policy-makers who feel or do not feel the pinch of their problems. The point is controversial, but I will continue to call for students to develop the habit of dedication and involvement in policymaking.[9] Thus I will continue to be skeptical of those who treat cavalierly their chances to make a difference in policy, even though their policy is only developed in a course that is seen as a stepping stone to a degree.

There are certain revisions in the simulation process, however, that I would make. A few can be mentioned.

To begin, one should not make a point about naming women as convenors of groups. As a woman student pointed out to me, drawing in fact from our readings, the finding that a species as a whole (say, women) has a certain overall proclivity (say, toward being effective school managers) says nothing about whether a particular woman in a particular group can or will rise to the occasion. So, in a revised simulation, one might encourage task forces to settle the leadership issue for themselves, perhaps appointing different convenors for each session, perhaps charging one member to consistently provide overviews or set tasks, or so on.[10] If a group insists, the instructor could step in to nominate a substantive leader and a process one. That dual leadership should emphasize the importance the professor places on intellectual cogitation and social interaction, with the two pursuits strengthening each other.

Originally I had thought that over four or five weeks a naive first run-through of the simulation would expose the students to certain gaps in their knowledge of the policy cycle; then a second and lengthier go-around (once we

had worked our way through the readings) would demonstrate how helpful the scholarly literature could be. But now I believe that probably one simulation per course is adequate, and that it should be in the middle or last third of the term, after we have grappled intensely with the readings, discussions of those texts, and lectures. It turns out that our second simulation last year was completed with less enthusiasm and, overall, with less insight than the first. While the nature of the second problematic situation and the pressures from other courses may have disconcerted my two low-energy groups in November and December, I suspect that a crucial difference in the two cycles was the freshness of the first challenge.

Out of the murk of various clues emerged the impress of the different groups' self, their senses of what the different problem and solution were. Besides the attributed comments on events that I used, graphs and other "hard" data also might serve as the jumping-off points for a simulattion.

Course readings could well be different and fewer. One might find a sophisticated text on policymaking and then supplement it with a dozen or so concrete cases. Optimally, these cases would be accounts by people who were involved in asking and telling themselves about policy problems, who had to specify resolutions through preferred courses of action, and so on. Class discussions could take cognizance of activities reviewed in those papers, relating those policymakers' cognitations and interactions to each other, to the general text, and to educational policymaking in the milieu in which the class is given.

Probably group-process skills in problem-finding and problem-solving are not part of the everyday repertoire of each student. One way to more or less cover that area, without losing precious in-class time, might be to assign a self-teaching guide on that subject, to be completed over the summer, before a doctoral course and year of residency began. Readings on group discussions might be assigned as well and games might be introduced to train groups in the pooling of information and the sharing of perspectives.[11] In addition, one might ask a graduate assistant to observe each of the student groups in a simulation; that assistant's data on the discussions might be used by the students and the instructor in reflecting on different phases of the course.

As with the external jury members at M.I.T., assessors might be brought in for comment on the groups' final presentations. These outsiders might be expected to offset the vested interests that students and even the instructor may have in different projects. It may be tempting to invite authorities very much in the public eye for this help, but my experience last term was that these persons cancelled at the last minute, disappointing all.

If an instructor adapts Schwab's simulated deliberation, he or she runs the risk of being accused of being too controlling, of insisting on working through his or her course ideas rather than heeding the concerns of adult students. Assuming, though, that the students do need experience in deliberation, the simulation has merit. As one of my students said, Schwab offers "not a recipe but a brief treatment of how one uses experiences, what is quality in policymaking, and what conditions can lift the deliberative process beyone the confines of mere technique." My experience last term with one operationalization of his approach is that it is one way to move at least a few students to view policy as something which is created by people processing their own moral, esthetic, and behavioral concerns. To some degree, some students can come to experience that there is no world of independent facts, that problems have no existence separate from the involvement of the policymakers, that data do not exist except as they are called into existence and weighed by human interests, and that possibilities for structuring reality are infinite.

NOTES

[1] This has been a theme in Zeigler's provocative works. See for instance, L. H. Zeigler, M. K. Jennings, and G. W. Peak, Governing American Schools: Political Interaction in Local School Districts, North Scituate, Mass., Duxbury Press, 1974, and H. J. Tucker and L. Harmon Zeigler, Professionals Versus the Public, New York: Longman, 1980.

[2] "Indeed, typically chief executive officers in education devote more than two-thirds of their working time to verbal exchanges, and only one out of ten of their work activity sessions is conducted in a solitary manner. See Gerald T. McLeod, "Keeping Worms in a Can: Crowded Hours in the Solitary Watch of a Board of Education Executive," unpublished report submitted to Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1980, and in press, OISE Press, Toronto.

[3] I do not mean to imply that all administrative decision-making ought to be shared. On this point, see the classic article by Edwin Bridges, "A Model for School Decision Making in the School Principalship," Educational Administration Quarterly, 3:1 (Winter, 1967): 49-61.

[4] Students were even given a short quiz (that had been announced in letters to them in July) on the Schwab material, thereby ensuring that they had at least begun to cope with the complex ideas therein. The test, incidentally, was a Majority Vote Quiz (MVQ), the first of several given over the term on the readings. Being doctoral students, many resented the MVQ's emphasis on regurgitation of information, their reasoning being that "As Ed.D. students, we should not be subjected to such jumping-through of other people's hoops. That may be all right for undergraduates or master's students but not us. A more collegial approach to teaching is what we appreciate." A few said, however, that they appreciated the skills of advocacy that the MVQs also were designed to heighten. For an introduction to this discussion technique, see Bertril L. Hanson, "Adventures with the MVQ," Teaching Political Science, October, 1977, 105-114.

[5] This is a slight rephrasing of certain questions of Schwab. See his "The Nature of Scientific Knowledge as Related to Liberal Education," in Science, Curriculum, and Liberal Education: Selected Essays, ed. by Ian Westbury and Neil J. Wilkof, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978: 102.

[6] On this, see Joan D. Meskin, "The Performance of Women School Administrators -- A Review of the Literature," Administrator's Notebook, XXIII, 1, 1-4.

[7] Jay Hall, "Decisions, Decisions, Decisions," Psychology Today, 7 (December 1971): 52-53.

[8] Jerome T. Murphy, Getting the Facts: A Fieldwork Guide for Evaluators and Policy Analysts, Goodyear Publishing: Santa Monica, 1980: 171-180.

[9] It is controversial because on the surface I seem to be offering the view, associated with Carl Rogers (in his Freedom to Learn) that the best discussions and decisions emanate from intensive group experiences, where individuals sort out their interpersonal anxieties and affections. Of course with my scant data, I can hardly speak empirically to that point. But on the basis of the performance of my "best" group in each simulation, I might at least hypothesize that caring relations between members of a work group can enhance the quality of the group's produce. Additionally, I would want to hypothesize that the climates of the "best" groups were not indiscriminately approving of each member's input, but that exchanges there were characterized by argument, challenge of unsupported assertions, criticism, and honesty.

[10] In setting up its procedures, groups may have to come to some sort of terms with the role of their women (and men) members. In the middle of the first work session for one group in the second simulation, one of the woman students began to be disturbed by the quality of her contributions. "I had little background or understanding of the situation, and quickly became insecure," she wrote, and "to counteract this feeling of uselessness, I volunteered to accept the role of secretary when the need arose. The group, not having been together long enough to understand each member, further complicated my distress by joking about womens' lib and male chauvinism and took this job away from me...Later I volunteered to complete other tasks, putting on a front that of course I was comfortable with them. I never openly admitted that I was confused and insecure but reacted by remaining silent. 'My information never got used.' On the face of it, this group needed some practice in organizing to consider the contributions of each member.

[11] See, for instance, "Learning Possibilities in Discussion," chapter 3 in David Bridges, Education, Democracy and Discussion, NFER Publishing: Berks, England, 1979 and G. Stanford and B. D. Stanford, Learning Discussion Skills Through Games, Citation Press: New York, 1969.